No. 11.

FACTS FOR THE PEOPLE

Mr. Laurier's Statement in Respect to Northwest Management

PROVED TO BE WITHOUT FOUNDATION.

Not a Single Half-Breed Dispossessed of his Property.

A few weeks ago Hon. Mr. Laurier visited Ontario and addressed a number of meetings. In answer to the challenge to name a single half-breed who had ever been deprived of an acre of land upon which he had settled, or to which he had a claim by virtue of settlement, he has cited two cases, the first being a dispute between Father Andre and a Mr. Kelly, and the second, the case of a Mr. Salter, who made an entry for a quarter section of land in the parish of St. Louis de Langevin. In support of the first, he said there was a letter of Father Andre's complaining that one Kelly had jumped his claim and had put up a frame building upon it. It happens that Mr. Kelly is at this moment residing in Ontario, and seeing the statement of Mr. Laurier he addressed a letter to the London *Free Press* as to the correctness of the statement, in which he has made affidavit, giving the

FOLLOWING PARTICULARS OF THE DISPUTE :

"Mr. Laurier, it seems, can find only one outrage to justify the rebellion, but that one it also appears is such a very bad case that 'no population in the world would have stood it.' Now, Mr. Editor, I happen to be the 'J. Kelly' who is mentioned, and I propose, with your permission, to let the country see how utterly Mr. Laurier fails to justify the rebellion by quoting my case as a case of grievance. In 1879 I went from Sarnia to Duck Lake, N.W.T., where my brother, Henry Kelly, had been settled for some years. Father Andre, of Duck Lake mission, held 200 acres of land, on which the mission was built. Alongside the mission land lay 320 acres which had for two years been held by a French-Canadian named Thibault, a member of Father Andre's flock, who claimed 160 acres as homestead and 160 acres as pre-emption. Father Andre also laid claim to the pre-emption land, on the ground that it belonged to the mission property, though the survey did not show it so. Thibault would not admit Father Andre's claim, and broke up four acres of the land to make his pre-emption title good. I was looking for land in March, 1881; Thibault came to me and said that as he was a member of Father Andre's congregation, he did not wish any trouble with the priest, and offered to sell me his claim to the pre-emption lot for $1 an acre for the improvements. I paid him the money, and went to work to make improvements, and hired a yoke of cattle and began ploughing, and put up the frame of a house. Father Andre came and threatened that "I must leave the land or he would fix me." But I could not see that his title was as good as Thibault's, and I refused to go. Father Andre went to the agent at Prince Albert, then to Lieutenant-Governor Laird, at Battleford; but both told him he had no case. Then he got up a petition among his parishioners to the department at Ottawa, but his claim was not allowed there either. In the meantime, I went on with my improvements until the beginning of May, when Mr. Owen E. Hughes, manager of Stobart, Eden & Co.'s business at Duck Lake, came to me and said he had an offer for me from Father Andre of $100 for my claim. I refused to take it. Mr. Hughes talked the matter over with my brother, who advised me to accept, as it might not be pleasant for me to continue a quarrel with Father Andre, and there was plenty of land as good to be got close by which nobody claimed. I told Mr. Hughes I would sell. A day was appointed, and Father Andre came to the office, paid Mr. Hughes the $100, which he handed to me, and accepted a receipt which Mr. Hughes drew out, and which I signed, transferring my right and title to the lot to Father Andre. That is a plain and true statement of the whole case, and your readers can judge how far that 'outrage' goes to justify the murder of the policemen, the shooting of poor Skeff Elliot, the Frog Lake murders, and all the other ghastly incidents of the rebellion. Mr. Laurier holds the lives of loyal Canadians cheap if he thinks 200 people were justly murdered because my land cost Father Andre $100.

The second was

THE CASE OF MR. SALTER.

Mr. Laurier's statement was that Salter had obtained an entry for a quarter section of land at St. Louis de Langevin, which was already in the occupation of a half-breed, thus dispossessing the half-breed of his holding. The record in the Department of the Interior on this subject, as furnished by the deputy minister, is as follows :—

"Neither the registrar of the department nor the chief clerk of the Patent Office has been able to find anything to indicate that the lands at one time entered in the name of Thomas Salter, or Richard Thomas Salter, which is the proper name, have ever been claimed in any way by a half-breed, or anyone other than Salter himself. His entries were for the south-east quarter of section 12, township 45, range 27, west of the second meridian, AND THEY HAVE SINCE BEEN CANCELLED AT HIS OWN REQUEST."

So that whatever may have been the original quarrel in this matter, the land has passed out of Salter's possession long ago, and there has been no further dispute about it. These are the only two cases mentioned by Mr. Laurier, and it will be seen that they utterly fail to meet the challenge given to name a half-breed who had been dispossessed of his land by the action or inaction of the Government.

Mr. Laurier, as an evidence of the want of good faith of the Government, referred to the mission of the

REV. FATHER LEDUC AND MR. MALONEY

to Ottawa. His statement is that those gentlemen came to Ottawa in the interests of the half-breeds generally; that they were promised a re-survey of the lands of St. Louis de Langevin, and that the promise, although given in writing, has never been carried out. The facts in this case are as follows :—In the first place, the mission of Father Leduc and Mr. Maloney had no reference whatever to the claims of the half-breeds or to the surveys in the district of Prince Albert. They came as representing the inhabitants of St. Albert, Edmonton and Fort Saskatchewan, which are between 400 and 500 miles away from the south branch of the Saskatchewan, where the rebellion broke out. As explained by the report of the Deputy Minister, the action of the Government in ordering Mr. Michael Deane, the surveyor to whom had been given certain specific work in the Edmonton district, and who had commenced other surveys without authority, to discontinue these other surveys, led to the fear that the Government did not intend to proceed with the surveys, and Father Leduc and Mr. Maloney were sent to Ottawa on the subject. Their memorial, presented to the Government on March 10, 1883, addressed on behalf of "the inhabitants of St. Albert, Northwest Territories," asked for certain specific things, as follows :—

1. That a river survey be allowed to them, with the two miles limit, as in Prince Albert, Northwest Territories and Manitoba.

2. Their claims having been occupied for many years, some of them before the transfer, they asked for the recognition of their titles by the Government and for their patents.

3. They asked on behalf of the settlements of St. Albert, Edmonton and Fort Saskatchewan, that the river lot survey be extended from Edmonton to Fort Saskatchewan, both colonies included, "as elsewhere on the Saskatchewan at Prince Albert, the Assiniboine and Red Rivers."

4. They asked for a land office at Edmonton, so that entries might be made and patents issued on the completion of their duties by the settlers.

5. They asked that persons who had settled in advance of survey should be protected in their rights as if they had settled after survey.

6. They asked for representation in the Parliament of Canada.

7. They asked for the abolition of timber dues.

8. They asked for the appointment of a registrar at Edmonton or its vicinity.

9. They asked that the road between Edmonton and St. Albert should be confirmed by a public highway.

10. They asked for scrip, as had been given to the half-breeds in Manitoba.

It will thus be seen that so far from Father Leduc and Mr. Maloney asking for surveys at Prince Albert or in the neighborhood of Prince Albert at St. Louis de Langevin, their prayer was

CONFINED ENTIRELY TO THE EDMONTON DISTRICT,

and had no relation whatever to the parish of St. Louis de Langevin and to the applications which had been made for a resurvey of that parish. On the 12th of April of the same year (1883) the Minister caused a written reply to be sent to the representatives, as follows :—

1. The lands were promised to be surveyed into river lots as requested.

2. Patents were promised to be issued as soon as the field notes and plans of the surveyor were sent into the department.

3. The request of the people of St. Albert, Edmonton and Fort Saskatchewan to have their holdings surveyed into river lots and the right of pre-emption given to them, was promised.

4. A land agent was promised.

5. The time spent by settlers on lands in advance of survey it was promised should apply in their application for patents as if spent after survey.

6. The question of the representation of the Territories in Parliament, it was said, would engage the attention of the Government.

7. The Government declined to abolish timber dues, holding that they were in the interests of the country, and necessary for the preservation of the timber.

8. It was promised that a registrar for the Edmonton district should be appointed.

9. The regulation of public highways being within the purview of the Lieutenant-Governor-in-council, it was promised that the attention of the Governor should be called to that paragraph of the memorial.

10. It was stated that the Government would consider the question of the claim of the half-breeds of the Northwest Territories to scrip.

SUBSTANTIALLY EVERY REQUEST GRANTED.

It will thus be seen that, substantially, every request made by Father Leduc and Mr. Maloney on behalf of the inhabitants of the Edmonton district was granted, excepting representation in Parliament, which of course was a matter of public policy; the abolition of timber dues, which applied to every part of the Territories; and the matters of scrip.

Mr. Laurier states that when Father Leduc returned to the Northwest he found that these promises had not been carried out. Father Leduc did write to the Government, saying that he learned that instructions had not been sent to the surveyor, as had been promised, but the answer of the department to that statement sufficiently meets that charge.

That answer was as follows :—

"DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR,
"OTTAWA, 3rd Sept., 1883.

"SIR,—I have the honor, by the direction of the Minister of the Interior, to acknowledge receipt of your letter of the 30th July last, and to request that you will be good enough to state in what respect, on you return to St. Albert, you found that the promises contained in the letter of the 12th April, 1883, which were the promises made verbally to Mr. Maloney and yourself when in Ottawa, had not been fulfilled by the Government. I am to call your attention to the fact that not only was Mr. Michael Deane instructed in regard to the survey, but a portion of his return of survey has already been received, and is at the present time being examined with a view to confirmation by the Surveyor-General. I am also to remind you that until the survey has been completed and approved, the other steps in respect to the claims of settlers at Edmonton, Fort Saskatchewan and St. Albert cannot be proceeded with. It is the intention of the Minister, however, that no unnecessary time should be lost, and the required action has so far been taken with as much promptitude as possible.

"I have the honor to be, sir,
"Your obedient servant,
"JOHN R. HALL,
"Acting Secretary."

As a matter of fact the instructions had been sent to Mr. Michael Deane to proceed with these surveys as soon as information was received at Ottawa that the people of Edmonton were under a misapprehension concerning the action of the Government, and before the arrival in Ottawa of the Rev. Father Leduc and Mr. Maloney; and more specific instructions were sent before the letter in reply to their memorandum was handed to them. Here is a telegram from the Surveyor-General, Mr Deville, addressed to the Minister of the Interior at Ottawa, on this subject:

"OTTAWA, 21st December, 1883.

"*To Hon. Thos. White:*

"Instructions to Michael Deane for survey of St. Albert settlement are 29th February, 1883. He was further instructed on 9th April, 1883, to give this survey precedence over any other work.

"E. DEVILLE,
"Surveyor-general."

These surveys were promptly completed; a land agent was appointed, Mr. Gauvreau, a French-Canadian, being named to that position; a registrar was appointed, Mr. Roy, also a French-Canadian, being named the registrar, and the claims of the people have all been satisfactorily settled. It is worth while to state that the people, on whose behalf Father Leduc and Mr. Maloney visited Ottawa, so far from complaining, or taking part in the rebellion, enlisted as volunteers in the service of the Government during the rebellion to maintain the authority of the Crown.

HALF-BREED CLAIMS SETTLED.

A popular argument used by Mr. Laurier with the object of showing the number of half-breeds who were interested in the distribution of scrip is the statement that the Government settled with 2,000 of them. This statement is most misleading. The claims recognized covered the cases of children, of deceased persons represented by heirs, and of half-breeds who were formerly dealt with as Indians, but have now withdrawn from treaty. In the case of the latter, the annuities formerly paid to them as Indians will be no longer paid to them. The following is an analysis of the claims recognized by the commission during 1885 and 1886 :—

	1885.	1886.	Total.
Treaty heads of families....	61	205	266
Treaty children.....	131	397	528
Non-treaty heads of families.....	325	78	403
Non-treaty children.....	760	212	972
Deceased heads of families.	158	85	243
Deceased children.....	251	182	433
	1,686	1,159	2,845

So that the number of heads of families in the Northwest, who were at the time of the outbreak entitled to scrip, was 403, instead of two thousand as is usually stated, and of these, only about a score were in the disturbed district or took part in the outbreak.